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## NEWS AND NOTES

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### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AT PORTLAND

So far as plans are completed, it is likely that the Council will hold two morning sessions, probably Wednesday and Thursday, in connection with the meeting of the National Education Association in Portland in July. One of these sessions is to be devoted to literature problems, probably with these topics: (1) How Much Use Shall We Make of Contemporary Literature? (2) Seeing the Classics as Wholes, (3) Literature for Vocational Courses. The other session is to be devoted to problems in composition, with these probable topics: (1) What Are the Essentials in Rhetoric? (2) Social Aspects of Composition, (3) Is Business English a Menace?

The Secretary of the National Education Association is urging attendance of all members of that organization, especially this year when the interest and financial strain of the war are tending to divert attention from educational matters to other things. No doubt this applies with perhaps more than usual force to the interests of English teachers, which are more likely to be overlooked at such a time as this than are those of the science people.

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### THE ASSOCIATIONS

#### THE INLAND EMPIRE COUNCIL

The second annual meeting of the Inland Empire Council of Teachers of English was held during the Inland Empire Teachers' Association meeting in Spokane, at the Lewis and Clarke High School, April 5 and 6.

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 by the president, Mr. Selden Smyser, of the Ellensburg State Normal School. After appointing the committee on nominations for officers for next year, Mr. Smyser introduced the first speaker of the day, Mr. Orville C. Pratt, superintendent of schools, Spokane, who spoke upon minimum essentials in English as determined by present-day conditions.

Mr. Pratt was followed by Miss Ethel E. Redfield, superintendent of schools, Idaho, who talked upon the advantages of supervised study, stressing its efficacy in forming habits of concentration, thoughtful consideration of the subject-matter studied, and discrimination between the essential and the non-essential. Discussion on Miss Redfield's topic

was led by Mr. Edwin Twitmeyer, state inspector of high schools, Washington, who described supervised study as practiced in the city school systems of Washington. Miss Gertrude R. Schottenfels outlined her plan for supervised study in the Boise High School, and Mr. J. H. Ackerman, of the State Normal School, Monmouth, Oregon, closed the discussion by pointing out the futility of the red-ink theme-correction habit and the satisfactory results of the laboratory method of teaching composition, in which pupils are trained to find and correct their own errors while writing.

Miss Doris Dow, of the Lewis and Clarke High School, Spokane, presented a report on teaching conditions. The rather scanty returns showed that full-subject teachers of English in the Inland Empire average three preparations and five classes per day, with an average membership of sixteen and a half pupils to a class. Miss Dow feels assured, however, that in the larger high schools the average classes range from twenty to twenty-five pupils.

Professor Milton Simpson, of Whitman College, Walla Walla, read the last paper, on "The Problem of Freshman English." He posited the idea that the primary aim of the Freshman course is to develop within the students the power of logical, forceful, fluent self-expression rather than to attempt to develop literary artists and connoisseurs. Dr. George R. Coffman, of the University of Montana, opened the discussion by reading a paper on ways and means to solve the Freshman problem, by Professor Frederick Padelford, of the University of Washington. Mr. Nicholas Hinch, of the Cheney State Normal School, suggested as one remedy the proper division and gradation of primary essentials of written and spoken English among the different grades in the elementary schools, holding the eighth grade for 500 words per week with a 100 per cent accuracy as the minimum of efficiency. Miss Gertrude R. Schottenfels advocated less pretentious courses of study in the high schools with more drill and constructive instruction in the basic essentials of both written and spoken English. For the colleges she advocated sub-Freshman classes for the totally unfit and the shaping of the instruction and the subject-matter of the Freshman course to meet the needs and to remove the deficiencies of the incoming Freshman. Professor Herbert E. Fowler, of the Lewiston State Normal School, also advocated strongly the sub-Freshman classes and spoke of sub-Freshman requirements in the University of Wisconsin and in the Lewiston State Normal School. Professor Harold G. Merriam, of Reed College, Portland, discussed the student end of the problem, presenting the average Freshman as a

bundle of inhibitions woefully in need of encouragement and sympathetic assistance. Professor William R. Davis, of Whitman College, Walla Walla, suggested the deferring of the latter half of the Freshman rhetoric course until the Sophomore year, as is done at Whitman. Dr. George R. Coffman discussed the efficiency of the Montana plan, which defers the Freshman course until the Junior year in the departments of forestry and of engineering, by which time the students themselves have come to realize their limitations in the efficient use of their mother-tongue and to wish instruction. President Smyser closed the discussion by pointing out the psychological significance and the good results attending the practice of giving the incoming Freshman a rest from work in composition.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15.

The executive committee met at 1:00 o'clock, Friday, April 6. Mr. Kenneth J. Olsen, of the Lewis and Clarke High School, Spokane, chairman of the Section on High-School English, gave the following report, which was accepted:

I. The committee has laid plans for ascertaining the library equipment, the classroom equipment, and the average number of students in the English classes of the high schools of the Inland Empire. The committee hopes to arrive before long at some definite standards for the size of classes and for adequate classroom and library equipment.

II. The committee is gathering data concerning the organization of the high-school course in English, and is especially interested in finding out what has been done toward separating composition and literature.

III. The committee plans also to take up the technique of teaching and to gather definite information concerning (1) minimum essentials, (2) devices for teaching English, (3) subject-matter taught and methods of instruction.

Dr. George R. Coffman, of the University of Montana, chairman of the Committee on College English, presented the following report, which was accepted:

The committee purposes to consider the following matters during the coming year.

I. Preparation of teachers of English. What are the colleges and the normal schools doing to prepare their students for teaching?

II. What should be the relation of the department of English in the state universities to the department of English in the public schools?

III. What should be required of students who major in English?

IV. What can the universities and colleges do to help the English work in the elementary schools?

The executive committee meeting was followed by the business meeting of the council, at which the following officers for next year were unanimously elected: President, Professor Herbert E. Fowler, Lewiston State Normal School, Idaho; secretary-treasurer, Mr. L. W. Sawtelle, North Central High School, Spokane; chairman of Committee on Elementary-School English, Miss Thomas, Sharpson School, Walla Walla.

GERTRUDE R. SCHOTTENFELS, *Secretary*

#### THE MARYLAND COUNCIL

The Maryland Council of Teachers of English held a joint meeting with the Educational Society of Baltimore, in the Eastern High School, on Friday evening, April 13. Dr. Edward F. Buchner, head of the department of pedagogy, Johns Hopkins University, was the presiding officer. The speaker was Mr. C. H. Ward, head of the English department of the Taft School, Watertown, Connecticut. His topic was, "Present Tendencies in the Teaching of English Composition." Mr. Ward presented a paper written in a clever style which brought out with many humorous thrusts the main points of his theme.

The entire discussion was based on the relative values of fluency and accuracy, and made out a strong case for the latter. The theory, so ardently advanced fifteen years ago, that fluency will induce accuracy in form, has not produced the results expected, and the present weaknesses in spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure must be eradicated by closer grading and original devices in common-sense drill. Mr. Ward paid tribute to the few secondary-school teachers who, from the beginning of the movement, had protested against this unlimited freedom among immature pupils, advocated by certain university leaders in psychology and English. These practical workers felt that such a disregard of drill in the fundamentals of the art of composition would produce a kind of "fatal facility."

The appearance of a new text on the "fluency first" plan started Mr. Ward on a questionnaire directed to representative teachers in all parts of the country. Of those replying, 13 per cent favored working for fluency first, 21 per cent for an equal attack on fluency and accuracy, and 66 per cent for accuracy first. Very definite instruction, correction, and drill must be given in diction, spelling, and grammar if the schools are to meet the demands, not only of the College Entrance Board, but of the business and social world as well. We shall need to restrict our energies to such concrete topics as "spelling demons" and

the functional study of grammar. As a justification for those who would insist on accuracy first, Mr. Ward directed especial attention to the method of teaching the mother-tongue in France.

ANDREW H. KRUG, *Secretary*

#### NEBRASKA COUNCIL

The Nebraska Section of the National Council of English Teachers held its second annual meeting in the banquet hall of the Lincoln Hotel, Lincoln, Saturday, May 5. The following was the program:

- 10:30—The Selection of Reading in the High-School Course.....  
 .....Miss Evea Moreland, Franklin  
 11:00—Socializing the English Recitation..... Miss Sarah T. Muir, Lincoln  
 11:30—English for Vocations..... Superintendent Fred M. Hunter, Lincoln  
 12:20—Luncheon in the Garden Room.  
 1:30—Greater Efficiency in the Teaching of English.....  
 .....Professor O. H. Venner, University Place  
 2:00—The Hub of the Curriculum.....Miss Blanche Riggs, Kearney  
 2:30—Spoken and Written English in the High Schools.....  
 .....Principal Jesse H. Newlon, Lincoln  
 Short Business Session.

There was animated discussion and exchange of views after each paper, and the meeting was thought by those present to have been very valuable and successful. There was excellent attendance, representing many parts of the state. Teachers were present from York College, Hastings College, the Kearney Normal, Luther Academy, Franklin Academy, Brownell Hall, Omaha High School, Ohioa, Superior, Fairfield, Bethany, College View, Nebraska Wesleyan, as well as from the University of Nebraska and from Lincoln. An impromptu addition to the program was the recital, by request, of several groups of "Western Traditional Songs," by Miss Lenore Burkett, singer, and Miss Louise Pound, collector. The officers of the Nebraska section for 1917 are Miss Mary Crawford, Kearney Normal, president; Professor S. B. Gass, University of Nebraska, secretary. Miss Louise Pound, of the University of Nebraska, was chairman of the committee of arrangements. The next meeting of the section will be held in connection with the meeting of the State Teachers' Association in November.

#### LOUISIANA STATE ENGLISH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The second meeting of this organization took place at Alexandria, Louisiana, April 13, during the meeting of the State Teachers' Association.

The topics for discussion were: "The Place of Oral English in the High School," "The Value of Dramatization," "The Short Story in the High School," "Shall We Grade Composition and Literature Separately?" "How to Vitalize Composition," "The New Emphasis on the Sentence."

The timeliness of the topics and the quality of the teachers who had accepted places on the program were attested by the large number of English teachers and others who were present to listen to, and participate in, the discussions. Every person on the program was present and "delivered the goods" in no uncertain fashion. Thoughtful experience and courageous enthusiasm characterized every paper and every discussion, of which latter there were many. There was not a dull moment during the three hours.

There are two weak spots in our organization. One is the lack of any dues and the other is that few of our members subscribe for the *English Journal*. The president of the organization, who was re-elected, assumes the responsibility for both of these defects, since he made his program too full to leave time for a business meeting. He promises to reform.

O. B. STAPLES

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## THE PERIODICALS

### HIGH-SCHOOL ENGLISH AGAIN!

The state high-school inspector of South Carolina, Mr. William H. Hand, contributes a short and sensible commentary on high-school English to the *High-School Quarterly* for April. Some of the criticisms of results of English teaching, he thinks, are plainly to be accounted for by unwise practice. The literature course is top-heavy and formal. Pupils who cannot read the text aloud intelligently are set to discussing fine points of technique. In like manner children are set to writing literary essays when they should be learning to make clear and grammatical sentences. Grammar study is cumbered with useless and artificial classifications and distinctions borrowed from Latin. English teaching would be better if it were less ambitious and more real.

### A CORNUCOPIA

The April and May issues of the *English Leaflet* (New England Association) contain much interesting matter. In the April issue Walter S. Hinchman, in discussing "The Fringes of Literature," insists

that we ought not to venture frequently yet timidly from the literature itself into the circumstances of its production, but that we ought to choose those elements of the environment which are really essential to the understanding of the literature, and to give them rather thorough study. This, he admits, will make slow work at first, but will so train the students that toward the end of their course their increased speed will make up for the earlier delay. In this number, also, is reprinted Berton Braley's poem, "The Thinker," a fugitive piece which teachers of English can use profitably in school. The number concludes with a summary of James F. Hosis's address on "Why We Teach Literature in Our Schools." He points out three particularly important offices of the study of literature: training, recreation, and socialization. In discussing the matter of socialization he warns against the didacticism, the hortatory manner, which has so frequently spoiled this aspect of our literature study. Literature will perform its office as a moral teacher if through it we come to a sympathetic understanding of the experiences of others.

The May *Leaflet* contains a "Possible Outline for a Course in Freshman Composition," by Irene M. Haworth. It is quite detailed and therefore very suggestive to those who are working up this sort of thing.

#### ARTICULATION

Miss Cora Dolbee contributes to *Educational Administration and Supervision* for April a long paper on "The Relation of the Elementary Course to the Secondary-School Course." It is an earnest and convincing plea for the building of a course in English from the first grade straight through the high school. It relates the experience of the teachers of Wichita with a bungling course in which all the work was prescribed for treatment in every year, with the result that the students, long before they reached the high school, had become blasé. The keynote of the new course which they have now put into operation is constant progress from year to year, with no repetition of any subject-matter as new material, but with constant cumulative review through application so that the child never has an opportunity to forget that which he has learned. The results in the two years in which the course has been in operation have been quite as satisfactory as could be hoped.

#### APPLIED ORAL ENGLISH

*The High-School Quarterly* for January contains an interesting article on "Oral English Practically Applied in High Schools," by J. E. Allen. Mr. Allen thinks that we ought to secure better results in oral English



than we have secured, but does not ask for more time. He thinks that what is needed is better motivation. For instance, the commonest need in oral expression is the ability to answer questions, and yet the teachers, by occupying forty of every sixty minutes of recitation time, really allow the pupils very little opportunity to gain skill in answering questions. Topical recitations should go with this. Again, most of us are making only inadequate use of the possibilities presented by dramatization, debating, declamation, and especially student organizations of various sorts. The very process of organizing, Mr. Allen thinks, brings some of the most valuable opportunities for oral expression. If organizations have not seemed to be successful always, it is because the leaders have failed to provide a variety of interest. His emphasis of the value of after-dinner speaking and such graceful trifles as the presentation of prizes is a rather new note.

#### A NATIONAL CREED

Some months ago Mr. Henry Sterling Chapin "conceived the idea of a Citizens' Creed which should set forth the duties and responsibilities of an American citizen as well as his rights and privileges. His idea was that the Creed should be based upon American principles—upon the ideals and achievements of the American people—and that it should be brief and simple so that it might easily be taught to children in the schools of the whole country." In order to secure such a creed a contest was inaugurated by *Educational Foundations*, and this has now been supplemented by an offer of a thousand-dollar prize for the city of Baltimore to the one who will send in the most acceptable creed. The Committee on Award is to consist of men of national literary reputation, such as Hamlin Garland and Booth Tarkington. The manuscripts must be received by the Committee on Manuscripts, Citizens' Creed Contest, care of *Educational Foundations*, 33 E. 27th Street, New York City, by September 14.